(b) the total amount so far spent on the project;

(c) how soon Government expect to complete the balance planned work;

(d) whether it is a fact that large amount spent on the project has not been properly used;

(e) whether Government will appoint Expert Committee to go into the progress made so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND REPORTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) Under the first phase of the Ganga Action Plan started in June, 1985, so far, 254 schemes have been completed out of 261 schemes sanctioned. An expenditure of about Rs. 450 crore has been incurred on the Action Plan till date. Work on the second phase of the Ganga Action Plan relating to the main stem of the river to cover the left-over components have also been approved at a cost of Rs. 648 crore. These works are in the initial stage of implementation and an amount of Rs. 11 crore has been spent on them so far.

(c) The remaining works of the first phase of the Ganga Action Plan are targetted for completion by 31.3.99, and that of the second phase relating to the main stem of the river by December, 2001.

(d) The funds released to the State Government under the first phase of the Ganga Action Plan have been used for the project except on some occasions when diversions were reported and necessary corrective actions were taken by the Government for recoupment.

(e) The Government have appointed a Project Advisory Committee of Exprets to go into the progress of implementation as well as operation and maintenance aspects of the Ganga Action Plan.

Ganga Cleaning Authority

1993. SHRI JOYANTA ROY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the date and object for which the Ganga Cleaning authority was set up;

(b) the progress made by the Authority to achieve its declared objects;

(c) whether Government are satisfied that the work has proceeded as per the schedules; and

(d) if not, what steps Government propose to take in order to ensure that work is completed within the minimum time to their complete satisfaction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTERY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) The Central Ganga Authority called the National River Conservaiton Authority with effect from 5th September, 1995 and chaired by the Prime Minister, was set up through a Government resolution dated 16th February, 1985. The objective of the Authority was to improver the water quality of the Ganga and its tributaries to acceptable standards through mobilisation of all agencies, such as State Government, local bodies, voluntary agencies and other organisations interested in this task.

(b) With the first phase of the Ganga Action Plan nearing completion, about 82% of the targetted capacity of sewage treatmet has been created. Wherever such works have been operational, the water quality of the river has improved.

(c) and (d) The implementaiton of the Ganga Action Plan has been delayed considerably due to problems of land acquisition, litigations, contractual disuputes and diveresion of funds. All these issues were taken up at the appropriate level in the State Government for speedy rectificaiton.

Distruction of Forests in Orissa

1994. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister o ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be plesed to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the growing destruction of forests in Orissa;

(b) whether the poaching of rare species is also going on unabated in that State; and

(c) if so, the details of the steps taken to stop the valuable forest resources and wild animals from destruction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) State of Forest Report 1997 published by Forest Survey of India indicates a marginal decrease of 166 sq. km. in the forest cover of the State. Report also reveals that 1,062 sq.km. of dense forest has changed to open forest. However, the area under mangroves has increased by 16 sq.km.

(b) Although some incidents of poaching of rare and endangered species are reported by the state from time to time, there are no reports of any large scale poaching of such species.

(c) Major steps being taken by the Government for conservation of forest and wildlife are as under:

(i) Afforestiation programmes are being undertaken.

(ii) Guideliens have been issued to involve village communities in protection and regeneration of degaraded forests through Joint Forest Management.

(iii) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted to regulate diversion of forest land.

(iv) A centrally sponsored scheme "Modern Forest Fire Control Methods" is being implemented to protect and conserve the forest from fire.

(v) Hunting of wild animals included in Schedules I to IV of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 has been banned.

(vi) Special measures for protection and conservation of tigers and elephants and their habitat are being implemented.

(vii) A network of 17 wildlife sanctuaries and 2 national parks covering area of 6677 sq.km. has been set up for conservaion of wild flora and fauna.

(viii) Raids are carried out by the wildlife authorities, whenever information of illegal trading in wildlife animals reaches them.

(ix) International Trade in Endangered Species of animals and articles made thereof is regulated under the provisions of the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Hazardous environmental conditions in Indrapaastha and Rajghat Thermal Plants

1995. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indraprastha and Rajghat Thermal Power Plant workers are dangerously exposed to deadly fumes emitted by the plants and majority of the workers are suffering from respiratory disorders;

(b) if so, the details thereof stating the number of workers in each of the power plants who died due to exposure to the deadly fumes during the last three years; and the number of workers suffering from respiratiory disorders in each of the plants; and

(c) the preventive measures taken by Government to improve the hazardous environmental conditions in these power plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

Extent of air and noise pollution in Delhi

1996. SHRI JOYANTA ROY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be please to state:

(a) whether, of late, the extent of air and noise pollution has increased mainifold in the capital rendering Delhi as the most polluted city in the World:

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take to tackle the alarming situation; and

(c) whether Government would like to enlist the active cooperation of the various voluntary organisations and NGOs in this regard and if so, whether the Government have formulated any scheme in this direction?